

EPA Statements Conflict About Action Against CF

78-31-76 p.1

Environmental Protection Agency officials gave conflicting statements Monday on the question of whether that federal agency will take legal action against CF Industries for dumping untreated industrial waste into Chickamauga Lake.

Paul Traina, director of EPA's enforcement division in Atlanta, was quoted by the Associated Press as saying Monday afternoon that "they (CF Industries) are violating federal law through their discharge and we're in the process of directing them to halt their discharge. We will order them to cease that discharge in compliance with the federal Water Pollution Control Act. We expect

this order to be complete within 24 hours."

Later Monday, however, Jim Patrick, head of the EPA investigative team which came to Chattanooga Saturday after CF Industries began discharging into the lake, said that no decision on enforcement action has been made.

He said that he had been in meetings with Traina all day, but that "there are still some things to be considered, and we'll be back at it tomorrow." Patrick said he hoped a decision on the matter would be reached today.

An explosion at the CF plant on Friday morning destroyed some \$500,000 in

water pollution control equipment. By the wee hours Saturday the plant's retention pond had reached capacity and plant officials decided to route the raw waste to the lake rather than shutting down operations.

EPA has requested CF Industries to stop the discharge, but its officials have determined that the discharge does not present any immediate health hazard.

Jack McCormick of the state department of public health said that as of the end of the day Monday his department was giving consideration to issuing a formal legal order requiring CF Industries to stop their discharge into the lake as soon as their water treatment equipment can be replaced.

He said, however, that any action taken by the EPA will effect what the state does in this matter.